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The rate of integration will not be increased until a different type of school organization is introduced. No one level of government can hope to solve the school problems of the South. Local, State, and Federal officials and aid should be brought together as a single working team. The school superintendent should be permitted to recruit an integrated faculty. Large sums of money should be appropriated for inservice courses for the staff. The size of the schools should be increased to include all factors of the society and to allow for more special types of programs. Free textbooks and supplies should be provided for all children. Strong legislation should be passed requiring all children to attend school until a minimum age of eighteen. Early childhood courses for all children three years of age and over should be introduced. Representative boards of education should be elected. Such conclusions were drawn by the author subsequent to his experiences in Prince Edward County, Virginia.

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Speeding School Integration in the South

Neil V. Sullivan

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The public schools of Prince Edward County, Virginia, were closed in the summer of 1959 in response to desegregation orders stemming directly from the 1954 Supreme Court decision. Private classes were opened for the County's white children in September 1959 by the Prince Edward School Foundation, and supported by the County through tuition grants to pupils attending. While legal efforts to reopen the public schools were pressed in state and U.S. courts, the County's Negro children remained without formal education until September 1963, when the privately-financed Prince Edward Free School Association opened classes with an enrollment of 1500 Negroes and four white children.

The Free Schools operated only for the 1963-64 school year because the U.S. Supreme Court in May 1964 declared the public schools' closing unconstitutional. The County's schools were reopened last September, with some 1500 Negro children and seven whites enrolled. All other white children remained in the Foundation schools, which continued to receive tuition grant support from the County. As this article went to press, the future of Prince Edward's dual school system was made unclear by new court actions challenging the tuition grants.

Neil V. Sullivan, Ed.D. '57, obtained leave of absence in 1963 from his post as superintendent of schools in East Williston, N.Y., to serve as superintendent of the Prince Edward Free Schools—becoming responsible, among other things, for recruiting 100 professional staff members for the Free Schools within ten days. Dr. Sullivan, who is now superintendent of schools in Berkeley, California, has based the following article largely on his experiences as superintendent in Prince Edward.

—Ed.

The day private schools opened in Prince Edward (September 1959), Negro children began a long vacation.

Office of Education-EDOP
Research and Materials Branch

The willingness of the South to integrate its schools is lacking, and in most areas we still find segregated student bodies. In a period of ten years (1954-1964) the increase of Negroes in white schools is but an appalling 1.18 per cent. This figure is made more ludicrous when we discover that over half of the increase can be found in one state (Texas), and that gain is the result of action taken in one city, San Antonio. This picayune number of Negroes in integrated schools did not result from voluntary action taken by white school boards, but from court action brought about by civil suits initiated by Negro groups or by State Pupil Placement Boards assigning a handful of minority-group children to predominantly white schools (a perfect example of "tokenism").

The rate of integration will not be speeded up unless a different type of school organization is introduced. Signs in the summer of 1964 clearly point out that the people of the rural South would prefer educating their white children in churches, pool rooms and tobacco barns rather than have their white schools admit a single Negro child. They are reluctantly willing to give up state aid and "go it alone," fully realizing that the education their children will receive will be second rate. The penalty paid for such stubbornness will be poorly-educated white children. If the penalty could be restricted to their own children, it would be bad enough, but the militancy of these citizens continues to have direct influence on the education of the Negro child. Because they dissipate their income on inefficient white private schools, they then refuse to raise taxes of sufficient amount to provide even mediocre schools for the Negro. The net result is two inadequate segregated school systems, and the vicious cycle continues with both the white and Negro children entrapped. The long denial of equal opportunity has inflicted deep wounds upon the Negro, and like wounds will soon be—as an inevitable result—the lot of innocent white children.

I have travelled throughout the South and have found most communities bewildered by the magnitude of the civil rights problem. They hear and see their elected leaders use Nazi-like techniques, but do not have either the intestinal fortitude or political ability to speak out and throw such tyrants out of office. Many white Southerners are aware that segregation constitutes an unmistakable deprivation of *their* rights as well as the rights of the Negro, but the small elite "power structure"—supported by local police and high state officials—stifles any real attempt on their part to face the problem realistically.

I am anxious to see fulfilled the promise of America to *all* of this country's citizens. We cannot afford to waste the greatness of the Negro, nor permit militant white Southern leaders to waste the potential of their own children. In Prince Edward County I found three Negro youngsters out of 1500 with I.Q.'s exceeding 150. This percentage is twice as great as that which we normally find in our most sophisticated communities. At this time in our history we cannot afford to waste such superior intellect. If we continue to do so, we must give up our hope for continued national greatness. Waiting for the average citizen to rid the South of the false political leadership that has for years hung like an incubus on the back of freedom is like looking for the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.

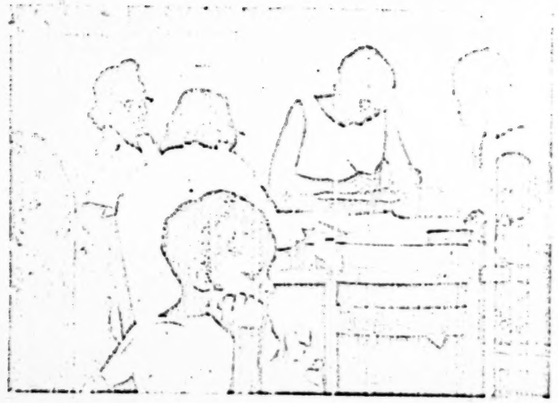
I am aware that the political leaders in the South will always consider me an outsider, and that an ability to grasp the peculiar flavor of Southern life comes mighty hard for me. Despite all of this, I have gained some insights while in the South, and I would like to share them with you.

First, no one level of government alone can hope to solve the school problems of the South

The Prince Edward Free Schools were successful because they brought together *local, state* and *federal officials*, and used the resources of all three groups. No single unit of government could have done it alone. Most rural counties do not have sufficient wealth to support a quality school system, and state governments are usually unwilling to pick up the slack. A combination of all three working together with *control held* by a *representative* local board (three Negroes and three whites) built one of America's finest school systems —in Prince Edward—in a "twinkling of the eye." A like triumvirate is needed in the rural South if the material things are to be made available to educators planning and supervising the educational program.

Second, the school superintendent must be permitted to recruit an integrated faculty.

I think that this is crucial, and, once it is accomplished, integration of the students also will be speeded up. It was an integrated staff in the Prince Edward Schools that prompted eight white children to enroll in



the predominantly Negro schools. The white leaders closed the schools in 1959 because they were convinced that such integration would result in bloodshed. During the summer of 1964 innumerable white parents indicated that they would send their children to the public schools if the staff were integrated.

Mixing the faculty is essential for several reasons. First, no one race can lay claim to all of the good teachers. Second, fair employment practices dictate that employing officers should select the best-qualified candidates. Third, the integrated staff will tend to add balance, and the exposure of the races to one another will contribute to the professional growth of both. Fourth, the color concept is lost by both white and colored children and also by the classroom teacher (white or colored) when they work together in the classroom.

My mail provided documentary evidence that competent Northern teachers would teach in the South if they could teach in an integrated school and if salaries were commensurate with their training and experience. In order to satisfy this financial request, it is necessary for rural communities to receive outside assistance. (I recruited a staff of 100 teachers in Prince Edward County, when not a single person knew exactly what salary he was to receive, and very few cared. We cannot, however, expect such missionary zeal to continue.)

Large sums of money must be appropriated for in-service courses for the staff. We must improve our schools at every level, but it is mandatory that we *provide training for the faculty.* Changed attitudes will result and learning will occur through involvement with other people and with new ideas. We must work together and develop a philosophy under which we can live compatibly, and at the same time get used to change. By doing this we can decide which of conflicting values to accept.

Third, increase the size of our schools.

The small school outlived its usefulness the day Henry Ford turned out his first "Model T" over a half century ago. Both white and Negro citizens realize that the small school fails the fast and slow learners alike, and does not administer to the needs of the average because instructional efforts are dissipated in the "little red schoolhouse." The average white Southerner is under the false impression that the Negro child will hold his child back. This notion, while untrue, can be eased by building campus-like schools where children are "tracked" in basic subjects. The large school salves the ego of both races and provides the special educational services necessary for all children. In addition, the large structure is economically sound and will result in dollar savings for the tax payers which can be returned to improve the program.

Fourth, provide free textbooks and supplies to all *children.*

The Negro child has a thousand handicaps as he enters school, and we should not accentuate them by refusing him a book, or a pencil, or a piece of paper. Give him the tools and he will compete with his white brothers.

Fifth, pass state legislation requiring all children to attend school until a minimum age of eighteen.

The South is educating only three-fourths of its total population—all, or most, of the white children, and about one-half of the Negro children. If all children are required to attend school until eighteen, we will soon see the demand for large vocational schools and large comprehensive high schools. In areas in the South where National Manpower Act vocational schools are built, we can point to integrated student bodies evolving on a *strictly voluntary* basis.

Pupils register for Prince Edward County Schools just before they opened in September, 1964.

Sixth, introduce "early childhood" courses for all children three years of age and over.

The average rural Negro child is handicapped when he enters school at the age of six because of a blighted home condition forced upon him by the low earning power of a parent who is captured and controlled by a white Southern aristocracy. We must enrich this child's life at an early age by providing him with some of the same rich experiences most white children receive before they enter school.

Seventh, elect representative *boards of education.*

I am not naive enough to believe that the white citizens of the South, in any large number, will vote for a Negro. I am a realist, however, and am convinced that under Title I of the Civil Rights Bill thousands of Negro citizens will finally cast a ballot as full-fledged citizens. Under proper leadership Negroes can and will change the balance of power at many levels, and place members of their own race on the local school boards, as supervisors, and even as United States Senators.

Neil V. Sullivan

In order for teachers to be effective in the classroom and in the community, they must be free to live, free to think, free to act and free to teach. They do not have these freedoms today, and must bow before the white "power structures" or be dismissed. Children and parents (both white and Negro) will gain respect for their teachers when they see them take a stand on salaries, take a position on curriculum, speak out on public housing. Such freedom cannot be found in the South today, and our Negro teachers have a restricted and negative influence in the community wherever they work. The teachers' image must be strengthened for morale purposes, and because the white community must learn to appreciate and respect the Negro educator as a first-class citizen.

To accomplish all of these goals the job must be shared by whites and Negroes in all fifty states. We must encourage (and provide opportunities for) qualified educators to teach in the South, while Northern administrators should open their school doors to qualified Southern teachers. In fact, Northern administrators as well as Southern should *seek out* good teachers from other parts of the country. All of us everywhere need to lift ourselves from the old familiar ruts. Because the South refuses to accept the responsibility for quality schools, Congress must vote millions of dollars for the schools of the rural South. The format for action was demonstrated in Prince Edward County. This experience should now be carried to every corner of the South.

The separate schools of the South, if permitted to continue, will perpetuate mutual ignorance among both whites and blacks, and are an implied public proclamation to all Negro Americans that they are of an inferior caste and unfit to mingle with the superior white caste. The continuance of the segregated school brands the stigma of degradation on our fellow citizens—citizens of great character, culture and intellect—and crushes their self-respect, making it extremely difficult for them to become productive citizens.

A tremendous educational force must be created in our society immediately and put to work, eradicating the conditions existing in the rural South. A nation dedicated to liberty, freedom and justice for *all* cannot sit idly by while the courts attempt to resolve the problem. If Prince Edward County's years of trial proved anything, they proved that court procedure can take an interminable amount of time and that thousands of children suffer while adults procrastinate.

We must move from apathy and ignorance to action and enlightenment by utilizing all the power of available and practical laws, together with individual and group dynamics in both political and sociological fields. The task is a mighty one, and no amount of new ideas, new blood, new concepts we may bring to bear will of themselves be sufficient. Only with hard work, dedication and "faith in right as God gives us to see the right" can we find light and eventual peace in this most plaguing, tragic problem that is for the Americans of the 20th century ours to solve. We must not fail this trust!